THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) 9,392 applications for issue of fresh passports were pending for clearance at the Regional Passport, Hyderabad as on 31st March, 1987.

(b) Out of the total pending cases as on 31-3-1987, 3,781 passport applications were pending for more than three months. No passport application was pending for more than six months.

(c) The reason for pendency was non-receipt of identity reports from the Police Authorities concerned.

(d) 1. The Foreign Secretary has recently written to all Chief Secretaries of State Government requesting them to impress upon their Police authorities the need for expeditious disposal of passport Verification Reports.

2. The Passport Officer has been directed to remind regularly the State Police/CID authorities to send their reports as early as posible. He has also been directed to visit Distt. Headquarters and meet Distt. SSP with a view to seek their personal co-operation in clearance of arrears.

STC building

987. SHRI SHANKER SINH VAGHELA:
SHRI KAILASH PATI MISHRA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a corporate headquarter has been built at Rs. 700/- per square foot by the State Trading Corporation which is more than double the narmal rate; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. R. DAS MUNSHI): (a) and (b) The provisional cost of the STC building, as per the latest estimates approved by the Government, works out to approximately Rs. 616/- per sy. foot. Since the construction work is still in progress and certain claims of the contractor have to be settled on the basis of arbitration award, the final cost is likely to go up further.

This cost cannot be taken as more than double the normal rate as the cost of construction varies from building to building depending upon various factors like structural pattern, height, type of glazing, extent of fire detection and fire protection systems, central air-conditioning, internal and external finishing etc.

Fire in Kirti Nagar industrial area

988. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a printing press and goods worth several crores of rupees were destroyed in a fire in Kirti Nagar ndustrial area in Delhi on 30th December, 1986; and

(b) if so, whether investigations have been made into the causes of the fire, and if so, what is the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI): (a) A fire broke out in the premises No. 9/54, Kirti Nagar Industrial Area, New Delhi on the 30th December, 1986. The major portion of the premises was occupied by M/s. T&R Industries and a portion by Surya Press. The estimated loss as reported to the Delhi Police is about Rs. 60 lakhs.

(b) A case under section 436 IPC has been registered at the Police Station Kirti Nagar. The Central Forensic Science Laboratory has carried out an analysis of the samples of burnt material collected from the site. The analysis indicates the presence of some inflammable liquid. No opinion has been given regarding the cause of fire.

Shelter given to Tripura National Volunteers in the Chittagong Hill Tracts

989. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Tripura National Volunteers who committed a series of murders in South Tripura recently have been getting shelters in the neighbouring Chittagong hill tracts;

(b) if so, wehther the matter has been taken up with the Government of Bangladesh for effectively checking the operation of TNV men from the territory of Bangladesh; and

(c) what other measures are being contemplated to curb violence by the Tripura National Volunteers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI): (a) According to reports, the Tripura National Volunteers (TNV) have been operating from bases across the border.

(b) The attention of Bangladesh Government was drawn to such reports. They have denied the existence of any such bases.

(c) Steps have already been taken to check the activities of TNV which include:—

(i) declaration of more areas as 'disturbed' in Tripura on 24-1-1987 by the State Government (ii) declaration of TNV as 'unlawful' organisation under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 by the Central Government on 4.2.1987 (iii) gearing up of intelligence net-work in the State, (iv) arrangements for better coordination between different agencies involved in the operations against the extremists, (v) increase in the vigil on the border (vi) the strengthening of para-military forces suitably.

Sending of Girls from Kerala to Italy

990. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made investigations into the reported allegations against a Priest in Kottayam, Kerala, for sending girls from Kerala to join nunneries in Italy; and

(b) if so, what is the outcome thereof and what action has been taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) According to the information furnished by the Government of Kerala Fr. Cyriac Puthenpura against whom some allegations had been made in this regard had denied the allegations.

Arrest of Army Deserters and Absconders in J&K

991. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of army deserters and absconders involved in criminal cases have been arersted in Jammu and Kashmir; and